

## Cherry Logan Emerson Jr., 90, philanthropist ✓

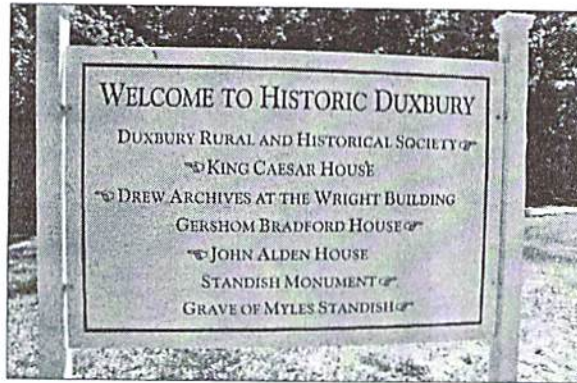
Funeral services were May 26 in Atlanta, Georgia, for Cherry Logan Emerson Jr., a longtime Duxbury resident who was esteemed as a scientist and as a philanthropist of the arts. He died April 29 at the age of 90 in his Atlanta home.

Born in Charlotte, N.C. and raised in Atlanta, Mr. Emerson was a 1938 graduate of Emory University and a year later earned a master's degree from the university's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Profoundly devoted to music, he was advised by a kindly teacher to pursue another career, and it was that advice that helped propel him to obtain a doctorate degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and to eventually co-found a highly successful chemical engineering firm called Emerson and Cuming.

The company, which employed about 700 workers and had offices in Massachusetts and overseas, specialized in developing chemical compounds and coatings for the defense and aerospace industries. The firm's work helped make the U.S. stealth bomber invisible to radar and provided materials for the re-entry shields of NASA's Apollo missions and the space shuttle. In 1978 the company was sold to W.R. Grace & Co.

In Duxbury Mr. Emerson and his wife, Mary (Lewis) raised six children — three girls and three boys — at their Peterson Road home. They were active members of the community. The family attended Pilgrim Church where Mr. Emerson taught Sunday school and, despite retiring to Atlanta in 1985, the Peterson Road house is still considered the family's summer home where Thanksgiving, with all the fixings, is still celebrated every June. Mr. Emerson was an active tennis player and golfer at the Yacht Club and in 2003, he (at the age of 87) and his son, Ned, won the club's father-son golf tournament.

His philanthropy at both MIT and Emory University has achieved legendary status. An obituary in the Atlanta Constitution credited him with being Emory's biggest



benefactor in recent years. His gifts include a science hall, a professorship, a science lecture series and an 850-seat concert hall. A spokesman from the Atlanta Chamber Players, which Mr. Emerson and his wife also sponsored, described him as someone "who made a phenomenal difference in the arts and sciences in Atlanta. It would take 10 people to replace him."

Mr. Emerson was also a leading benefactor of the arts and engineering departments at MIT and was a driving force of the Rockport Chamber Festival. "This man was truly a gift to humanity," said MIT Professor Ellen T. Harris in a Boston Globe obituary. "He was able to motivate people in so many ways."

In Duxbury one of Mr. Emerson's final acts of generosity was completed this spring with the help of Nancy Bennett who is an old family friend.

As Nancy tells the story, the Emersons, once ensconced in their summer home, would have lunch almost every day at Bobby Hackett's in Pembroke. That meant leaving Powder Point, driving up St. George Street and through the traffic lights to Route 14. Their son Billy was usually at the wheel. And every day that they went to

and from the restaurant, Mr. Emerson would notice the dilapidated condition of the "Welcome to Historic Duxbury" sign that noted some of the town's historical locations.

Last August, before returning to Atlanta, and after passing the dilapidated sign once again, Mr. Emerson called Nancy and asked for her help, she being a restoration whiz having led a successful drive to rebuild the old Blue Fish River Fire House on Washington Street.

With the help of Town Manager Richard MacDonald and Patrick Browne of the Historical Society the sign was replaced.

"He knew the new sign was done, but he never saw it," said Nancy. "But that's okay. The story just shows what kind of man he was."

In addition to his widow, Mary, he leaves his daughters, Mary Emerson-Smith of Atlantic Beach, Fla.; Katherine Emerson of Atlanta and Laura Dunn of Oakland, Calif.; three sons, William Emerson of Holden, Warren Emerson of Arlington, Va., and Ned Emerson of Holliston; 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

His ashes will be buried in Mayflower Cemetery.